

pursuit. His servants came back to tell him that the fugitive had swept the stables clear of horses. And then Galerius could scarce restrain his tears (*Viz lacrimas tcnebat*).

It is a story which does infinite credit to Lactantius's feeling for strong melodramatic situation. No picturesque detail is omitted—the setting sun, the tyrant plotting vengeance over dinner, his resolve to sleep long, his baffled triumph, the escaping hero, and the butchery of the horses. Yet we question if there is more than a shred of truth in the whole story. Galerius would not have given Constantine the sealed order overnight had he intended to take it back the next morning. A word to the officer of the watch in the palace and to the officer on duty at the city gate would have prevented Constantine from quitting Nicomedia. The imperial post service must have been very much underhanded if the Emperor's servants could not find mounts for the effective pursuit of a single fugitive. Galerius may very well have been unwilling for Constantine to go, and Constantine doubtless covered the early stages of his long journey at express speed, in order to minimise the chance of recall, but the lurid details of Lactantius are probably simply the outcome of his own lively imagination.

Constantine seems to have found his father at the port of Gessoriacum (Boulogne), just waiting for a favourable wind to carry him across the Channel into Britain. Constantius was ill, and welcomed with great joy the son whom he had not seen for many years. We do not know what time elapsed